

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

March 5, 2003

5:30 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Pinard, Shea, DeVries

Messrs: V. Lamberton

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, regarding a request from the Airport Director to change the salary grade of the Airport Security Manager.

Ms. Lamberton stated Kevin Dillon is out of town. His secretary, Doreen, called and asked if this could be tabled again until the next meeting and then he assured me that he would come to the next meeting.

Chairman Lopez stated before we table this, I would like to discuss it so that we have all of the information. Maybe Aldermen Shea...I don't know because I wasn't here when Red Robidas got hired and he had responsibilities at the Airport but I think we need complete documentation in reference to this. I would like the HR to provide us with the pay structure at that time. I think 50% of the pay was coming from the Airport. Now the Manchester City side is going to have to pick up Mr. Robidas' entire pay if we allow this to go through. We need background information on Red Robidas and if he was in charge of the Airport or not.

Alderman Shea stated I think that there was a dual type of situation where he was involved with the Airport but also with the City. In other words when there was a problem at one of the local department he was, in fact, involved there. I am really not sure if it was 50/50 or 70/30 but there is some proportion of his salary that is obviously met by City taxpayers. The rest, of course, is from the Enterprise at the Airport.

On motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to table this item pending further information.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, requesting

approval of a proposed policy for a new program developed by the Quality Council called the Bright Ideas Program.

Ms. Lamberton stated the members of the Quality Council unfortunately couldn't be here tonight because each one of them had another commitment and I guess they didn't realize that it was going to come up this quickly. Brent is working on his Master's Degree and he has classes from 4-6 PM over in Durham today as I understand it. He is the Acting Chair right now of that committee. When I first came to the City the employees were trying to develop some kind of a program that would reward employees monetarily if they came up with an idea that would save the City money. Over probably a year ago we finally came up with this proposal that is before you. Frankly it is very similar to a program that the State has. We sort of plagiarized it a little. Basically an employee...if you look at page 3 in the policy and look at the table that talks about the different scopes of suggestions there are four types of suggestions. An idea that would improve economy, would improve efficiency, would improve effectiveness and productivity or would improve safety of operations. Then you will see that the magnitude of the suggestion would either be minimal, moderate or wide. After minimal you will see that it would be...say it was a minimal idea under improved economy, the award would be \$33. That would be a pretty small suggestion that would just affect a very small work area. As you can see, each category has the same thing so moderate would be \$67 and wide would be \$100. Wide means under all of these that it would impact citywide. So minimal would probably just be in a work area or a bureau or something. Moderate would be within a whole department and then wide would be citywide. So the employee has an idea and the employee has to do all of the research. It is up to them to do a thorough proposal. Within each department there would be a committee that would review that proposal and either agree with it, disagree with it, send it back to the employee asking for more information or tell the employee that it is not complete, etc. Then that committee within that department would make a recommendation to the city wide Bright Ideas Committee. That committee would then review the proposal and either recommend that it receive an award or not receive an award. Then we would go forward from there.

Chairman Lopez stated as you are well aware, Betsi and I sit on the Quality Council. I can tell you that this has been in the making now for well over a year. You may recall that we had originally told the Committee that this would be forthcoming. It has been a long time coming. I think that one of the major things I would like to let the Committee know is that I think there are ideas out there but I think the employees never get an opportunity to really get those ideas to upper management for whatever reason. This way we can get the ideas and there could be substantial savings if they come up with great ideas. As Ginny said, they have to do all the work. I think if you go to page 2 it tells you what the department review panels will look like. I think it is important that it is pointed out that when the individual submits the suggestion that they get an answer back in writing whether it is adopted or not and it is kept on file for a year in the event that it can

be adopted at a later time. In other cases it could be a certificate of appreciation, a plaque or dinner for two, which I think we are in the process of working on.

Alderman Shea asked, Ginny, would this pertain to department heads as well as workers or workers rather than just department heads.

Ms. Lamberton replied actually that was never discussed. I don't know. I think that would be up to you actually.

Alderman DeVries asked can I address that. The awards need to be limited to those actions clearly beyond the normal duties and responsibilities of the City employee. So, if it is a department head that is doing something that is beyond his normal duties he would be eligible.

Alderman Shea asked so if a department head were to come up with an idea to whatever improve safety of operations...

Alderman DeVries interjected if that is within his normal range of duty he would not be eligible but if he had a suggestion relating to a different department that is not the normal scope of his duties, he would be eligible for that.

Alderman Shea asked so in other words if the Chief of Police hypothetically had a suggestion for the School Department or School District that would be.

Alderman DeVries answered yes.

Alderman Shea asked how about workers that would have the same...would they have the same prerogative as well.

Alderman DeVries replied yes and that is addressed if you look at page 4. The extraordinary service award is the one exception to that where it can be within their primary duties but it has to exceed that which could be expected of the employee and it clearly outlines that.

Alderman Shea asked, Ginny, when it was at the State level were there any drawbacks or negativity at all that you can bring forth that would possibly impact this. If you said that it was in existence at one time at the State level...

Ms. Lamberton interjected it is provided for at the State by State law.

Alderman Shea stated if it was all positive then that is fine, but if there were any kind of negativities of any sort I think you should call this to our attention. Not that I am against this because I am not, but I am just saying that because of your background and experience you may have been aware of certain types of drawbacks that occurred but if you are not that is fine.

Ms. Lamberton stated the only thing that I would say negative is that an employee might be disappointed if their idea wasn't accepted or if somebody else already had the idea or it just wasn't going to work and they maybe put a lot of work into it just as you would a project in school.

Alderman Shea stated well maybe this is something that should be called to the attention of the workers sometime in the process so that in that event...

Ms. Lamberton interjected we could do articles in the newsletter. I would presume that if an award was going to be paid that the employee...I think we would bring the employee before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and we have a camera and we can take a picture and put it in the newsletter and write an article and give them all of the recognition that they deserve.

Alderman Shea responded what I am saying is my point is that if ideas are brought forth and the ideas are not adopted I think that employees should be made aware of the fact that not all the ideas that are being brought forward are going to be necessarily an idea that is going to have an award attached to it. This is what I think should be made known to the workers when this is implemented. That is what I am saying.

Alderman DeVries stated I would add to that, Alderman Shea, that this program has already received the endorsement of all the labor unions in the City so that bridge has already been crossed.

Alderman Shea asked so they are aware of the fact.

Alderman DeVries answered they are aware of and have signed off on the program.

Alderman Shea asked and all of the workers have already been included in that signing off in terms of their understanding. Are they going to bring that information back to their workers?

Alderman DeVries replied I am not sure that it has reached the non-affiliated employees.

Alderman Shea stated I think it should.

Alderman Pinard asked, Ginny, is there a similar thing that is going on at the State level. How does their program work?

Ms. Lamberton answered as I said we sort of plagiarized it a little. I had written it before so I kind of brought it with me. It is the same process. There is a committee at the department level and then there is a committee that is appointed by the Governor and it has the State Comptroller on it, the Director of Personnel, a

public citizen and two other people that I don't remember. What we used to do is get the suggestions and if we had more questions we would send a letter back to them. The reason we had the finance people on it is if it was a financial suggestion we needed that to be verified and analyzed so we would ship it off to the Comptroller. He would take it and come back with yes this is good or not it is not. I am trying to think. An easy example would be some employee at one of the Technical Colleges proposed that the State change some type of oil that they were using and I don't remember if it was in cars or buildings or heating or what but it did save money so that person received an award and that idea had nothing to do with that employee's regular job. Those are the types of things that people would receive awards for.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to recommend approval of the Bright Ideas Program.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, requesting approval to place non-political advertisements in the City Matters newsletter and to give the monies collected from those advertisements to the Employees Events Committee.

Chairman Lopez stated the Employees Events Committee is looking for some seed money for when they plan trips like for example if they go to Montreal and get so many hotel rooms they have to put down a deposit. They are looking for some type of seed money. What type of advertisements are we talking about?

Ms. Lamberton replied I don't think a week goes by, sometimes every day during the week where I don't have companies asking me to distribute their marketing materials to the City employees. As you probably know, there is an ordinance that doesn't allow for that and secondly even if there wasn't an ordinance I wouldn't do that. I don't see that as the role of HR. It almost gives by appearance that you are endorsing it or encouraging people and that is not good. What I am thinking, what we talked about at the Quality Council was if a company or in this instance actually one of the credit unions has been pushing a little and a bank...if they are offering our employees something special, which is what I said here, then we will take an ad from them but we are not going to start advertising cars and cell phones and everything else. If they want to give City employees a free cell phone and extra minutes, good. If they are not doing that for anybody else, then I would take an ad from them.

Chairman Lopez stated the credit union does advertise to its members but we wouldn't let them advertise in the newsletter.

Ms. Lamberton replied the newsletter is supposed to be about stuff that is going on in the City.

Chairman Lopez asked so an ad that says support your local credit union wouldn't apply.

Ms. Lamberton answered I would want more than that. I would want them to say free checking or something.

Chairman Lopez asked who would they make the check out to.

Ms. Lamberton answered I would have them make the check out to the Employee Events Committee because if it comes to me I can't give it to them. That is one of the problems here.

Alderman Shea asked, Ginny, who is going to be the conduit through which information is going to be filtered. Is it you who is going to decide? Is it a committee that is going to decide what might be appropriate? Obviously 95% of the material would be but there might be a little bit of gray matter here and somebody is going to have to say well this is of a political nature and we don't want to accept that. Who is going to do that?

Ms. Lamberton responded I am basically the cook, wash, bottle person and everything right now for the newsletter so I can do that too.

Alderman Shea asked so it has been established that you are going to be the ten pin.

Ms. Lamberton answered right.

Chairman Lopez stated I just want to clarify something. I am just not clear. You are restricting it to what?

Ms. Lamberton replied good taste, appropriateness, I don't want to have the whole...

Chairman Lopez interjected your good taste might not be my good taste.

Ms. Lamberton responded I don't want to create an expense either. I don't want to have to put extra pages in the newsletter so I will do it with taste, with good judgement and what is in the best interest of the City and if it is political or not. If a car dealership comes to me and says they are offering \$200 under sticker price...everybody is offering \$200 under sticker price so I am not going to go for that. I will just use my best judgement and when I am not sure I will ask other people what they think.

Chairman Lopez stated in working with the newsletter people too, I can just foresee that some travel agency is going to come along and say I have a good deal for the employees. Would something like that be appropriate?

Ms. Lamberton responded again if they could show me that it is a special deal just for City employees I would probably be included to allow them to put a little ad in the newsletter.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to recommend approval of the request to allow non-political entities offering special items or services to City employees to place advertisements in the City Matters newsletter and to have the fees collected from such advertisements be appropriated to the Employee Events Committee.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee